Southeast Region Team Process for the Development of Fishery Management Plan Actions

Interdisciplinary Plan Teams (IPT)

In the Southeast Region, NMFS and the Councils have developed a team process when working on various fishery management actions. The purpose of the teams is to frontload the fishery management plan process to reduce or eliminate problems that might halt or delay the implementation of various rules and amendments. Key responsibilities of the teams are to:

- Make recommendations on NEPA documentation
- Identify data and analytical needs to support the action
- Refine the purpose and need for the action
- Make recommendations on action alternatives that represent a reasonable range for consideration
- Write and review amendments and supporting documentation.
- Responds to Council instructions on document content

Note: Depending on timing, some steps may be skipped to ensure timely submission of documents.

IPT Staff Composition

Mandatory staff

- **Council staff**
- SERO staff from SF, Habitat, PR (as appropriate)
- **NEPA Coordinator**
- **SEFSC** staff
- **GCSE** staff
- **Headquarters SF**

Optional staff (dependent on type of action)

- **Permits**
- **Enforcement**
- **USCG**

IPT Team Leaders

Both SERO and the Council appoint IPT Team Leaders. The IPT Team Leaders are responsible for:

- An action plan that includes a timeline and specific staff responsibilities
- **Coordinate and draft data requests**
- **Organize meetings**

Council -

NEPA

- Serve as a conduit for comments
- **Develop ground rules on team interactions**
- Resolve team conflicts through consensus
- Update team members on activities relevant to the action

IPT Core Team

The IPT Core Team is responsible for developing initial drafts of documents and writes the majority of the document sections. The Core Team is comprised of specific Council and NMFS staff biologists, economists, and sociologists with knowledge of the fishery. The Core Team often includes a member from GCSE to ensure legal requirements are being fulfilled.

Fishery Management Council

List of Acronyms

Notice of Intent Draft Environmental Impact Statement DEIS Environmental Assessment Protected Resources Division Environmental Impact Statement Regional Administrator Southeast Regional Office General Counsel Southeast Region SERO Interdisciplinary Plan Team SF - Sustainable Fisheries **Division National Environmental Policy Act** USCG -**United States Coast Guard**

Council identifies management problem, need for amendment/rule, and actions to address need IPT established through memo from RA **IPT** convenes for first time Refine purpose and need for action • Suggest preliminary actions/alternatives Develops realistic timeline for activities Suggests type of NEPA document required for action If EA indicates EIS needed EA **Action Plan EIS** Core team develops scoping document, **NMFS Publish NOI** reviewed by full team **Scoping document presented to Council Modify Approve Scoping hearings IPT** reviews scoping comments **Develop options paper** Scoping comments and options paper presented for Council review **Modify** Approve to develop as public hearing draft IPT works on public hearing draft based on Council comments Council reviews public hearing draft and may select preferred alternatives **Modify Approve** If EIS, publish NOA - 45 day comment period on DEIS **Public hearings** Council reviews public hearing and DEIS comments; selects preferred alternatives **IPT** works on final draft **Council reviews final draft Notice of Availability Modify Approve Council moves to send amendment to Secretary of Commerce**

Decision Process for Integrated MSA-NEPA Actions

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